



NEWS RELEASE

Archbishop Rummel High School

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NEW HONORS CURRICULUM, ACT PREP CLASS OFFERED TO STUDENTS AT ARCHBISHOP RUMMEL

A new honors curriculum for its gifted students and an ACT Prep class for all students greeted members of the 2007-08 student body at Archbishop Rummel High School when they walked on campus in August.

Both programs were implemented this school year after an extensive review of the school's three academic programs, future state requirements, and test scores of current students and alumni.

"We want to challenge our students on all academic levels with a demanding curriculum that will prepare them academically and will guarantee them constantly improving test scores," said John Gabriel, academic assistant principal.

He said that students and parents today are test score savvy because they know that tough academic programs and high test scores will result in college admissions and funding.

Gabriel added, "The state-established TOPS program that awards monies to college students based on grades and test scores made all families look at their high schools' academic programs. With our new program, we welcome their scrutiny."

Beginning with this year's freshman class of 2011, Archbishop Rummel honors students must take three years of Latin plus two years of a modern foreign language and a full credit of Honors Computer Science. The computer class is a programming class and not an applications class. Also honors students must take an honors elective in Biology II, Chemistry II, or Advanced Placement Statistics.

When these honors seniors walk across the stage at graduation in 2011, they will be graduating with 34 high school credits. These credits will include five credits in English, mathematics, and foreign languages, four credits in science and social studies, and a half credit in ACT Prep.

ARCHBISHOP RUMMEL NEW CURRICULUM

“The state currently requires seniors to graduate with 23 credits (24 credits next year), but our honors graduates will leave us with 34 credits. Archbishop Rummel’s students in the academic program graduate with 28 credits. Both programs far exceed state requirements,” Gabriel said.

Another change for the Class of 2011 and beyond is entrance into the Honors Program. Previously, all students in all tracks would be honors graduates if their Grade Point Average was 3.0 or above, but now students will be invited into the Honors Program.

“Those students who demonstrate outstanding performance after their eighth and ninth grade years will be invited into the program and will follow a specific, challenging honors curriculum,” explained the assistant principal.

At commencement those students who have successfully completed the program with a specific GPA will receive an Archbishop Rummel Honors Diploma.

“Upgrading our honors requirements has given Archbishop Rummel the opportunity to create an Honors Program that is second to none in the metropolitan New Orleans area,” claims Gabriel.

While the new Honors Program is specific for the school’s gifted students, the ACT Prep is inclusive of all students.

“We wanted to help our students improve their performance on standardized tests in general and the ACT in particular, so we created a half credit ACT Prep class for all juniors,” said Michael Scalco, ’67, principal.

He explained that the course is offered during the students’ junior year because much of the material covered in class is Algebra II-based. Students take Algebra II during their junior year.

Scalco said that the school has offered the class previously to honors students only, but the new class is the school’s first attempt to address the needs of all students and to improve performances on the ACT.

“We are very aware that our parents need help paying for college, and since ACT scores are major factors in qualifying for TOPS, we felt it was in our students’ best interest that we address test-taking skills directly through our curriculum,” Scalco explained.

Junior Jeremy Batson is currently taking the ACT Prep class and began the course with an 18 in English and a 28 in reading. After taking just one nine weeks of the course, he has raised his test scores to a 26 in English and a 34 in reading.

“I was surprised how much my scores rose,” he said, “but the class has given me a real understanding of the actual ACT.”

Like Batson, junior Kyle Simmons is in the academic program and said he has learned ACT test-taking tactics in the course.

“I know how to evaluate the questions and know the techniques for comprehension. When I read test questions, I understand how they want me to answer,” he said.

After just one nine weeks period, his scores have increased significantly. His English scores went from 18 to 27 and his reading went from 27 to 36.

Former academic assistant principal Michael Mahoney is teaching the class and is pleased with the students’ successes.

“Many of the ACT Prep students surprise themselves when they see their improved scores. Now they’re challenging each other to see who can increase test scores the most. It’s a real healthy competition,” Mahoney explained.

He said an indication of the course’s success is that 20 seniors have requested that they take the class. He said the inquiries indicate their awareness of the importance of standardized test preparation.

“We believe this new ACT Prep class, coupled with our revamped Honors Curriculum, will have a major impact on our students’ ACT scores and college admissions rate,” concluded assistant principal Gabriel.